

Warrior Preparation



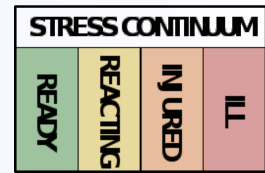
USMC Combat Operational
Stress Control (COSC)

Pre-Deployment Operational Stress Workshop for Marines and Sailors

Revised: 1 Jun 2008

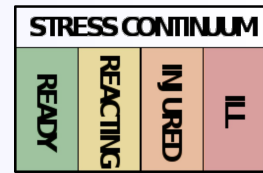


Commandant's Message





Overview and Purpose



- **Define key concepts**
 - Stress
 - Coping (being “**Ready**”)
 - Stress “**Reaction**” vs. stress “**Injury**”
 - Stress “**Illness**”
- **Understand Continuum Model, and identify common sources of operational stress**
- **Describe ways to recognize and take care of stress **reactions**, stress **injuries**, and stress **illnesses** in you and your fellow Marines**
- **Describe stress coping/managing tactics and timelines**
- **Identify resources for getting help for stress **injuries** and **illnesses****



What Are “Stress” and “Coping”?

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

“**STRESS**” Any challenge to the body or mind

- Always both a danger and an opportunity
- Necessary for life and accomplishment

“**COPING**” Changes in our bodies, minds, or environments to adapt to stress

- Three main ways (tactics) to cope
 - ✓ Strengthen yourself
 - ✓ Manage your environment (including relationships)
 - ✓ Compartmentalize stress when necessary
- Coping is how we manage stress
- But coping takes time — to do and undo



Combat Operational Stress Continuum for Marines

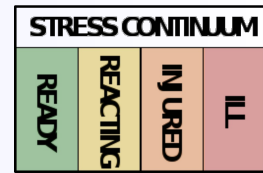
STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
• Good to go • Well trained • Prepared • Fit and tough • Cohesive units, ready families	• Distress or impairment • Mild, transient • Anxious or irritable • Behavior change	• More severe or persistent distress or impairment • Leaves lasting evidence (personality change)	• Stress injuries that don't heal without intervention • Diagnosable PTSD • Depression • Anxiety • Addictive Disorder





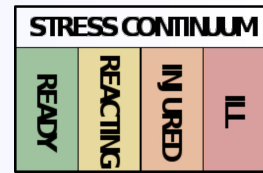
Sources of Operational Stress



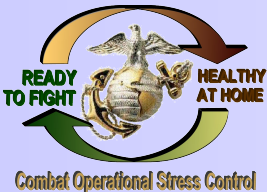
PHYSICAL	• Heat • Cold • Dehydration • Sleep deprivation • Injury or illness • Toxins
THINKING	• Being hyper-focused • Lack of information • Boredom • Too much information • Uncertainty
EMOTIONAL	• Fear of injury or death • Hatred • Fear of failure • Horror • Guilt or shame
SOCIAL	• Being away from loved ones and friends • Loss of personal space • Isolation
SPIRITUAL	• Life doesn't make sense like it used to • Challenge of faith • Moral conflict



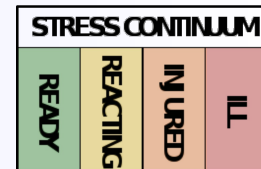
Discussion Question



- **For those who have deployed before, what were your most significant sources of stress?**
 - **In your physical life and environment?**
 - **In your thinking?**
 - **In your emotional life and feelings?**
 - **In your social life and relationships?**
 - **In your spiritual life?**



How Do We Manage Combat Stress?



STRENGTHEN YOURSELF

● Physically

- Strength Training
- Endurance
- Physical skills
- Rest and recovery

● Mentally

- Familiarity
- Confidence
- Stress “inoculation”
- Positive attitude

● Spiritually

- Worship
- Prayer
- Fellowship

MANAGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

● Social environment

- Trust and support
- Unit cohesion
- Family cohesion
- Eliminate stress

● Physical environment

- Protective equipment
- Squared away
- Stress coping tools
- Recreation
- Reduce stressors

COMPARTMENTALIZE STRESS

● Thinking

- Tune out dangers
- Tune out horrors
- Don't dwell on negative
- Avoid self blame

● Feeling

- Numb to fear
- Numb to sorrow
- Numb to suffering



Discussion Questions

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

- What have you already done to manage yourself and your environment for the stress of deployment?
- What can you do to further manage stress after you deploy?
- How do you know if you or a buddy have effectively compartmentalized stress? Can this happen?:
 - Too little?
 - Too much?
 - Too long?



What is a “Stress Reaction”?

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

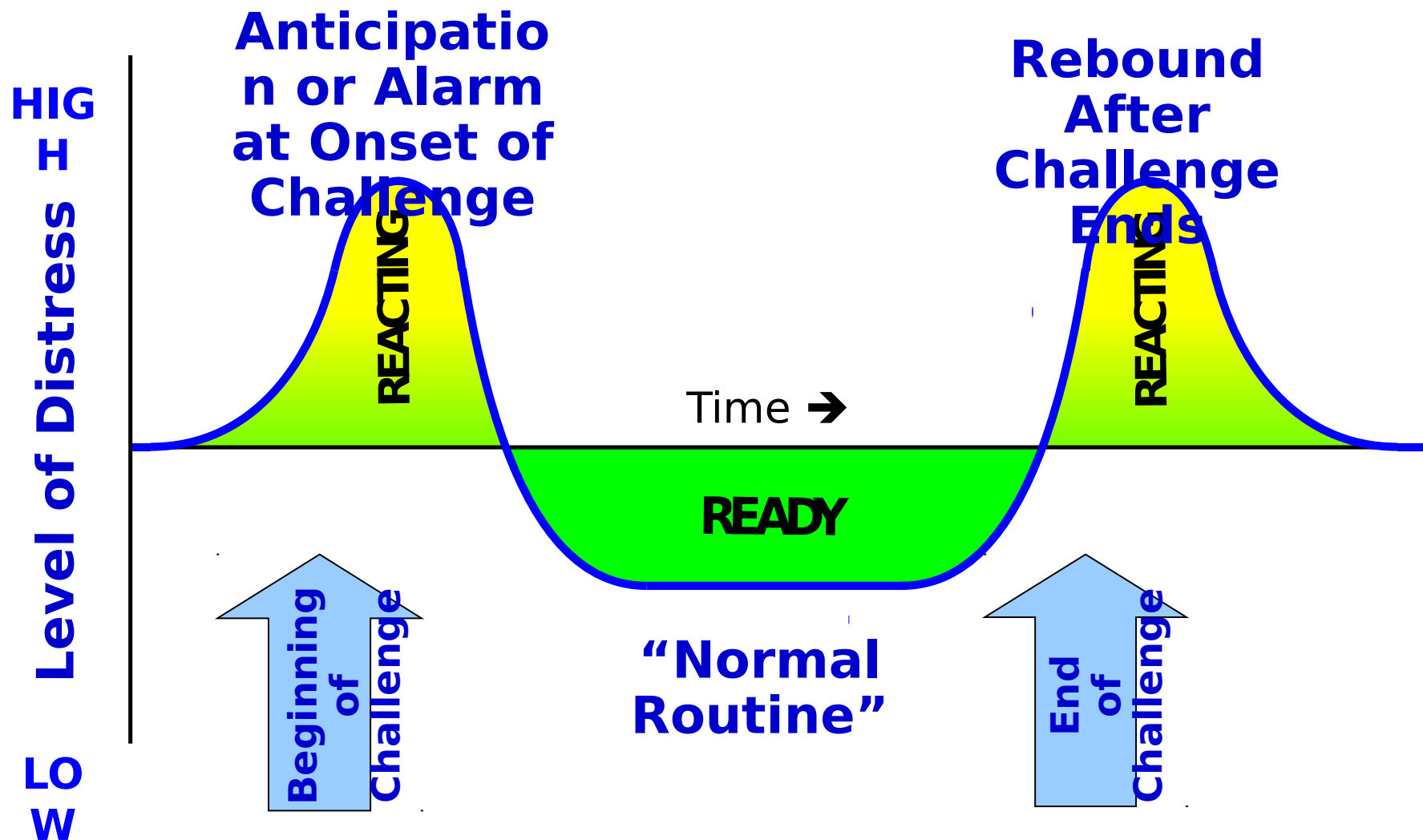
“STRESS REACTION”

Temporary, mild mental or physical distress, or impairment of function, due to stress

- Common
- Temporary
- Mild
- Normal and expectable

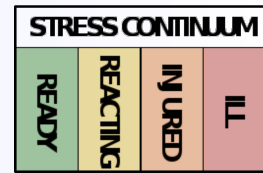
Time Course of Normal Coping and Adaptation

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL





Discussion Questions

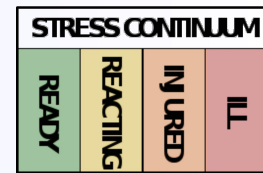


- What are some examples of Marines experiencing high levels of stress just before or at the very beginning of a deployment or mission?
- What are some examples of Marines experiencing high levels of stress at the end of a deployment or mission?



Recognizing Stress Problems:

Green (Ready) Yellow (Reacting)



READY	REACTING
• Calm and steady • Confident and competent • Getting the job done • In control • Sense of humor • Sleeping enough • Eating the right amount • Working out, staying fit • Playing well and often • Active socially, spiritually	• Feeling anxious, irritable • Worrying • Cutting corners on the job • Short tempered or mean • Irritable or grouchy • Trouble sleeping • Eating too much or too little • Apathy, loss of interest • Keeping to oneself • Negative, pessimistic



Discussion Questions

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

- **How can you recognize and take care of stress reactions?**
 - In yourself?
 - In a buddy?
- **How can you recognize and take care of burn-out?**
 - In yourself?
 - In a buddy?



Managing Stress Reactions

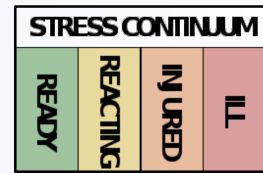
STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

MANAGING STRESS REACTIONS

- **Get more sleep and rest**
- **Work out regularly**
- **Spend time with people you trust**
- **Attend to your spiritual needs**
- **Resolve sources of stress and worry**
- **Take your mind off of worries you can't fix**
- **Have fun when you can**
- **Encourage yourself and others**



What Are “Stress Injuries” and “Stress Illnesses”?



“STRESS INJURIES”

Wounds to the mind or brain caused by intense or prolonged stress

- Trauma
- Fatigue
- Grief
- Moral injury

“STRESS ILLNESSES”

Disorders that may arise if stress injuries don't heal

- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance abuse or dependence

Orange Zone: Stress Injuries

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL



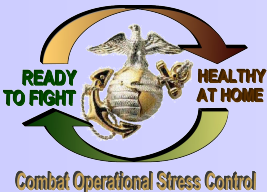
Stress Reactions

- Adaptive or maladaptive coping responses
- Unconscious choices
- “Normal reactions to abnormal events”



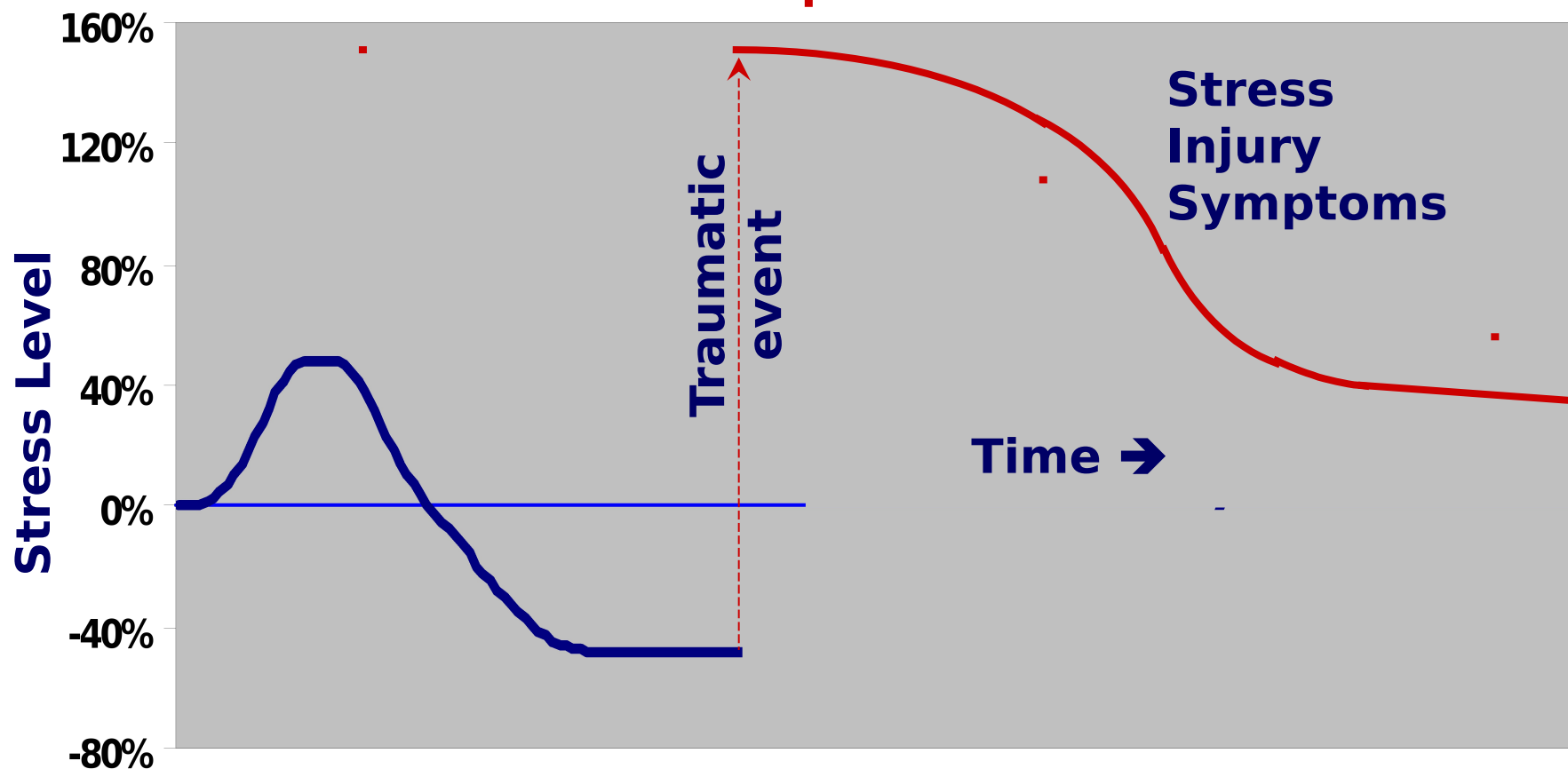
Stress Injuries

- Symptoms of damage to mind and brain
- Not chosen
- Cannot be undone (though usually heal)



Adaptation Disrupted by Traumatic Stress Injury

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL



Four Sources of Stress Injury

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

Intense or Prolonged Combat or Operational Stress

IMPACT

- A trauma injury
- Due to events provoking terror, helplessness, horror, shock

WEAR AND TEAR

- A fatigue injury
- Due to the accumulation of stress over time

LOSS

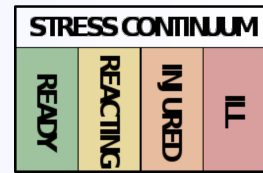
- A grief injury
- Due to loss of people who are cared about

INNER CONFLICT

- A beliefs injury
- Due to conflict between moral/ethical beliefs and current experiences



Discussion Questions

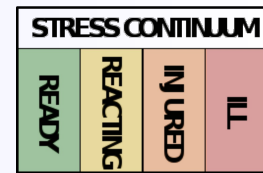


- What are some events in a combat zone that can cause traumatic stress **injuries**?
- What are some factors that contribute to the wear-and-tear of fatigue stress?
 - On the home front?
 - In a combat setting?



Recognizing Stress Problems:

Orange (Injured) & Red (Ill)



INJURED	ILL
• Loss of control of your body, emotions, or thinking • Can't fall or stay asleep • Recurrent vivid nightmares • Intense guilt or shame • Attacks of panic or rage • Inability to enjoy activities • Disruption of moral values • Serious suicidal or homicidal thoughts	• Stress injury symptoms that last for <u>more than several weeks</u> • Symptoms that get <u>worse</u> over time instead of better • Symptoms that get better for awhile but then come back worse

Severe Distress: Wear and Tear Injury

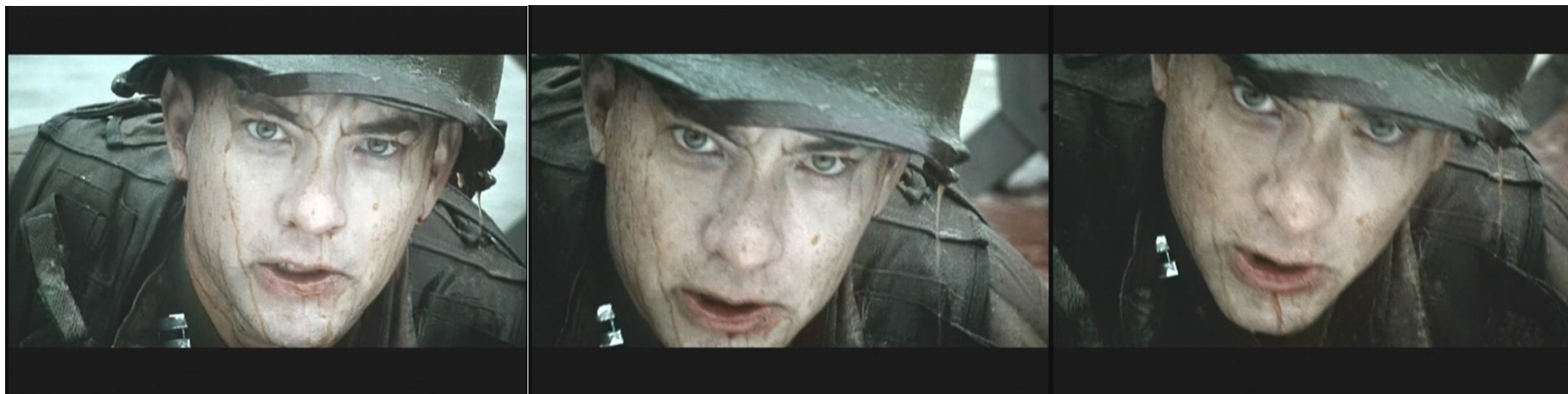
STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL

- A fatigue injury
- Due to the **accumulation of stress over time**
- Abrupt change in attitudes, values, and behavior
- Person becomes uncharacteristically:
 - Careless
 - Lethargic
 - Disinterested
- May be subtle



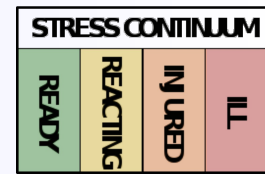
Severe Distress: Trance-Like Dissociation

STRESS CONTINUUM			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL



Tom Hanks in "Saving Private Ryan," Paramount Pictures,
1998

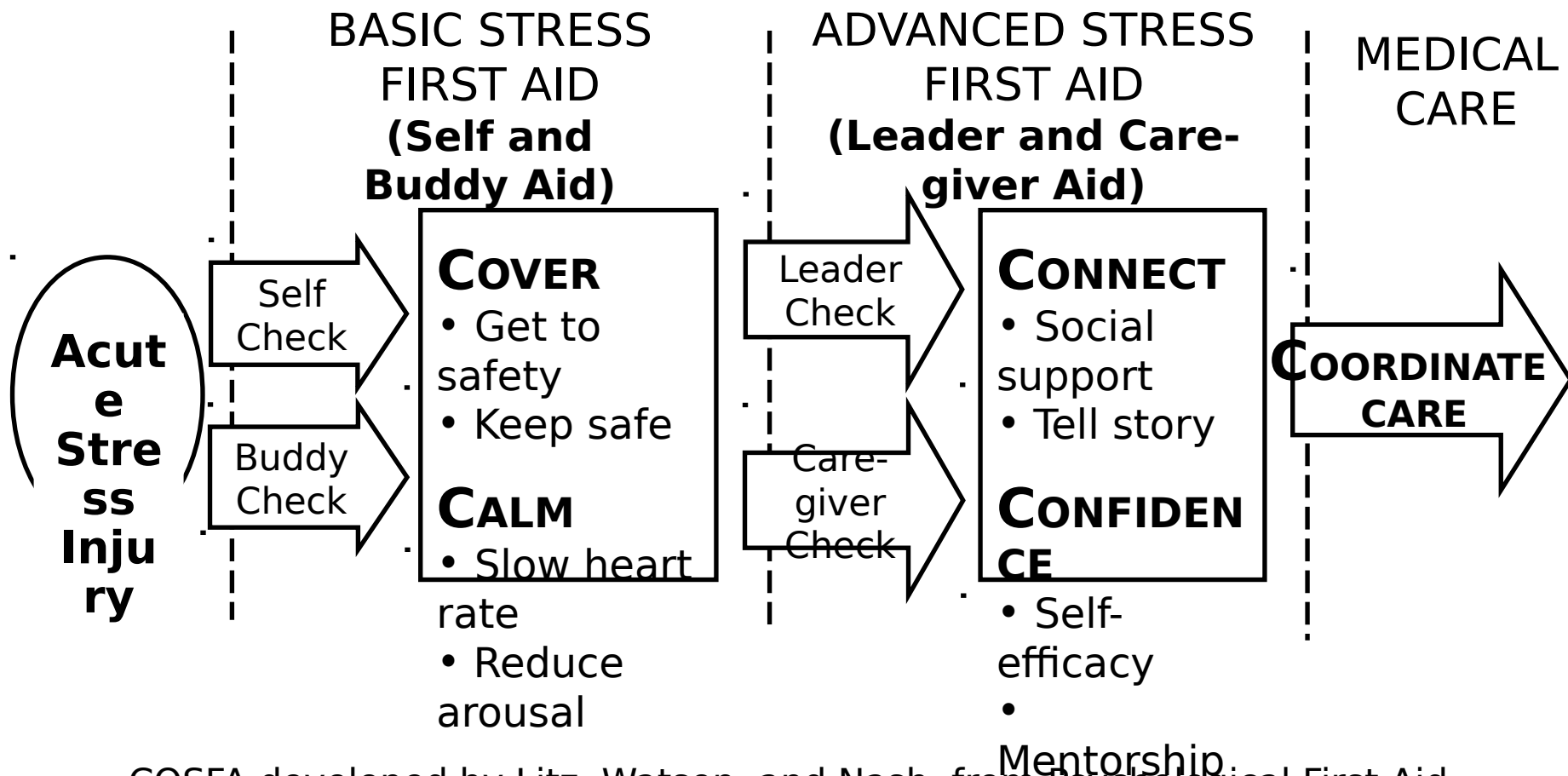
Severe Distress: Other Loss of Control



- Uncontrollable rage
- Uncontrollable shaking, panic
- Loss of emotional control (“hysterical”)
- Temporary blindness, deafness

Combat and Operational Stress First Aid (COSFA)

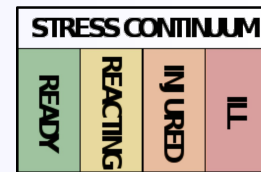
STRESS CONTINUUM			
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COSFA developed by Litz, Watson, and Nash, from Psychological First Aid (PFA), originally developed by NCPTSD, NCTSN, and USUHS



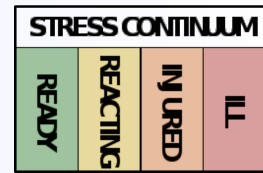
Care for Excessive Stress and Stress Injury



- **Get safe** — Get out of danger as soon as practical, and stay surrounded by trusted unit members (not alone)
- **Calm down, take slow deep breaths** — Slow down your heart rate as soon as you can after excessive stress
- **Sleep** — Often 1-2 nights sleep are enough to recover (tell the doc if you can't get to sleep or stay asleep)
- **Talk with trusted peers, leaders, or care-givers about what happened** — Talking helps you make sense out of it
- **Don't blame yourself** — If you wouldn't blame another Marine or sailor for the same thing
- **Get help from a chaplain, doc, or medical officer** — If you can't stop thinking about a bad experience or symptoms don't improve
- **Don't seek revenge** — Revenge will only hurt you and the honor of the Corps in the long run
- **Carry on** — Continuing with life is the best way to honor the fallen



Where To Get Help



- **Corpsmen**
- **Chaplains**
- **Unit medical** (BAS, RAS, GAS, etc.)
- **Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) mental health team, if your unit has one**
- **Medical Treatment Facilities (Hospitals and Clinics)**
- **MLG Surgical Company Forward**
- **Marine and Family Services Counselors**
- **Military OneSource** (www.militaryonesource.com)
- **Vet Centers** (www.va.gov/rccs)
- **HQMC COSC** (www.manpower.usmc.mil/cosc)
- **Marine Leaders Guide** (www.usmc-mccs.org/leadersguide)

Questions?



**USMC Combat Operational
Stress Control (COSC)**

www.manpower.usmc.mil/cosc